226 461 month. The decline in opportunity is due, not to the weather, but to the scarcity of fish, which are said to move from these coastal waters during the winter season.

226 821 [434] The fishermen follow the lunar calendar. The type of fish caught is determined by the season. There is some specialisation based on age and experience. Only the skilled and relatively young can successfully make a living diving for the lobster and disengaging him from the rocks below. The most intense activity is during the summer months, and the cash earnings of the fishermen are greatest at this time.

226 821 Fishermen pay attention to the weather and to the moon. Part of their weather knowledge comes from traditional lore, part from observation, part from the modern storm warning systems. Fishermen do not go out if there are storm clouds overhead, especially if they are moving fast. The worst sign is an increase in the height of the waves, even if the weather is good. The phases of the moon are also considered. The half moon is the best, the quarter moon is good, but neither a full moon nor a moonless night is considered favorable. The exception is fishing for white cuttle fish, caught on winter moonlit nights. At present, official storm warning signals are universally observed. The red flag flying from a pole on the main street near the breakwater is enough to keep every fisherman at home. This faith in meteorology has not always existed. Even in recent years, fishermen have disregarded the warnings because of disbelief, or ignored them when storms did not appear following a previous warning.

226 Fishing in the Hinatogawa area is coastal (if we include distances up to twelve miles out) and is on a small scale. Much of the gear is improvised by the fishermen themselves. The methods are simple and effective, and the boats are small. This is not one of the most important fishing areas in Ryukyuan waters.[1]

226 868 [813] Men become fishermen by imitating their skilled elders. Knowledge of the fish and of the waters is imparted by word of mouth. The old men are the sources of the detailed knowledge of the currents and of the main fishing grounds, and this knowledge, held in the memory, is also transmitted orally. There are no maps or charts. Usually it takes a beginner about two years to become acquainted with the fishing areas, and about three years to have a working knowledge of the currents.

1 For a general discussion, see Aquatic resources of the Ryukyu Area. (U.S. Dept. of the Interior. Fish and Wildlife Service. Fishing Leaflet 333), Washington, 1949. This work has an interesting collection of maps and drawings of various types of nets. It is not concerned with particular areas in Okinawa, nor with customs connected with fishing.